

Ashford CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125228
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340741
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Jennifer Taylor

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Elliott
Headteacher	Mr Gavin Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	3 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at policies, procedures for safeguarding and assessment information together with examples of teachers' planning and pupils' work. They also analysed 136 questionnaires returned from parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by pupils
- the effectiveness of recently introduced strategies designed to raise levels of attainment and accelerate the progress for all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school set in a densely populated area close to a major London airport. Most pupils come from White British families. Very few pupils do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national figures. Their range of needs include speech, language and communication difficulties. During the previous year there have been disruptions to staffing due to prolonged periods of absence caused by ill health. The headteacher is on extended sick leave and the school is being led by the deputy headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Under the effective leadership of the acting headteacher, senior staff are supporting and driving improvements despite the disruptions to staffing and extended absences due to ill health. They are working together well as a team to ensure greater consistency of practice in most areas of the school's work. Recent detailed self-evaluation involves staff at all levels and provides an accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring and analysis of pupil achievement and teaching and learning are improving. As a result, standards are rising, although attainment is satisfactory. Last year there was a significant increase in the number of older children reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics. Pupils who have difficulty reading and writing are making the same progress as their classmates.

Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning are having an impact on the quality of learning. However, good practice is not yet consistent in all classes. Pupils learn best when teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve, and when work is well matched to their individual needs. There are still some lessons, however, where teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels. As a result, some pupils, especially the higher attainers, do not always have sufficient opportunities to work independently or use their initiative and sustain rapid progress. The quality of marking is also inconsistent. There are missed opportunities for teachers to involve pupils in their own assessment and to comment on what they need to do to make their work better. This means there are some pupils who do not yet have a clear understanding of what they must do to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to pupils' good personal development. It is enriched by educational visits and a very good range of after-school clubs and activities. Subject leaders are working together to develop their role in strengthening links between subjects and to evaluate success. The school acknowledges this is at an early stage of development and that more remains to be done, for example to challenge higher attaining pupils.

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a warm, welcoming environment which reflects the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are friendly and courteous and they appreciate the support they are given from members of staff. There are good links with outside professional agencies to provide specialist advice and support when necessary. Arrangements to ensure a smooth transition between different stages of education are good.

The governing body has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the issues

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facing the school. They are involved in the school's work and are devising new ways of holding the school to account for its performance so that the recent progress can be extended and consolidated. The school recognises that communication with parents could be better. Senior staff are working with governors to find new ways of involving parents so they are kept fully informed of school development.

The acting headteacher and senior staff have correctly identified the weaknesses in provision through accurate self-evaluation involving all staff. It is the drive for further development shared by all and the recent improvements in pupils' achievement that confirm the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and further raise standards especially in science by:
 - increasing the opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative
 - involving pupils more in their own assessment so they have a clearer understanding of how they can improve their work.
- Improve communications with parents so that they are fully informed about the development of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The vast majority of pupils make the expected progress, or better, from their various starting points. Standards are broadly average but are rising. Pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. Recent data show that the school has been successful at increasing the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils' current work shows this trend is being maintained. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress than most because they are identified early and support for them is well focused. The best progress is made when teaching is sharply focused so that activities are carefully modified to meet pupils' needs precisely. A recent focus on raising standards in writing across all age ranges has had a positive effect on standards across the school.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They behave well and clearly understand right from wrong. Most pupils say they feel safe in school because 'the teachers are comfortable to be with, you can have a conversation with them, and they quickly deal with any unacceptable behaviour'. Pupils are confident that adults will always deal with any incidents should they arise.

Pupils understand the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and enjoy the very good range of sporting clubs and activities, including sailing, organised for them after school. Pupils contribute well to the school community by acting as monitors and 'playground friends'. There are good links within the local community, especially the local church, but pupils' knowledge and

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understanding of other faiths is less well developed. Attendance is satisfactory. The school always follows up absences in order to reduce the number of holidays taken during term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The best teaching takes full account of the needs of individual pupils so that tasks are closely matched to their differing abilities. This is due to the impact of the recently revised system for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. As a result, teachers are much better at planning work so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. However, this is not consistent across the school. There are still some lessons where too much time is spent explaining tasks and teachers miss chances to move learning forward. Consequently, pupils, especially the higher attainers, do not always have sufficient opportunities to become actively engaged in their learning and explore their own ideas for themselves. The quality of marking is also inconsistent. There are missed opportunities for teachers to add comments to show pupils what they need to do to make their work better.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Parents are confident that the school looks after their children well. Good support is provided for those pupils who need extra help. Partnership with other agencies makes a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and provides specialist advice and well-targeted support. Staff are clear about pupils' health, safety and welfare, and policies and procedures are carefully implemented.

The curriculum is being reviewed to increase the links between subjects so that skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology can be practised and developed in other subject areas. However, too few changes have been made so far to allow their full impact to be measured. There is very good provision for sporting activities and after-school clubs. This adds much to the pupils' enjoyment of school and makes a significant contribution to their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and senior staff have worked well together to maintain a calm and positive learning environment despite the many staff changes and extended absences due to ill health.

Things have not been allowed to stand still. The senior staff, in partnership with the governors, have undertaken a review of school effectiveness. They have correctly identified areas for development and have implemented plans to address any weaknesses. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been inconsistent. This is improving. The newly appointed subject coordinators are fully aware of what needs to be done to raise standards and are beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility. A new structure is now in place to monitor the effectiveness of the school and is embedding ambition and driving improvements. As a result, the school is improving pupils' outcomes and promoting equal opportunities for all groups of pupils.

The governors actively support the school and share a vision for its future development with the acting headteacher. Increasingly, governors ask challenging questions so they can hold the school to account for its performance. However, they recognise that communication with parents and carers remains an area for improvement.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are satisfactory and the school ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It has reached out well to the

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wider community in very many ways. However, links with communities globally are at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children begin school in Reception their skills and abilities are below the levels expected for children of a similar age particularly in personal development and communication skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the development of literacy skills, so that they enter Year 1 at expected levels. Provision is judged to be good because children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Teaching and learning are good. There are clear plans and many adults are well deployed to support learning. Staff use questioning well to reinforce children's learning and encourage children to become independent learners. There is a good balance between adult and child-led activities. The outside area is well equipped and used well to support learning. Adults keep very detailed notes of what each child can do and use these observations well to inform the next stages of learning. Relationships are good and children are happy and behave well.

All of the adults work well together and ensure the children are safe and well cared for. The children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning and they start Year 1 as confident and independent learners.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They believe their children are happy and well cared for and are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Some parents expressed concerns that they do not have enough information about how their child is progressing at school and insufficient notice is taken of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors agree and have asked the school to find ways of improving the communication with parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashford CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 387 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	55	57	43	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	45	73	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	18	90	68	16	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	25	85	64	10	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	26	84	64	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	25	79	60	17	13	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	20	97	73	7	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	17	85	64	11	8	5	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	21	89	67	10	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	16	87	66	12	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	15	80	61	22	17	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	24	75	57	17	13	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	33	75	57	9	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashford CE Primary, Ashford TW 15 2BW

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons, and talking to so many of you.

You go to a satisfactory, and improving, school. This means there are lots of things that it does well, but also there are some things that could be better. We were pleased to see that you are working hard and making satisfactory progress. You work well together, cooperate and listen to each other. These are important qualities that will help you get on in life.

We have asked the staff to help you even more by making sure your lessons are all as good as the best, so that you can make even more progress. Also, we want staff to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently. Some of you told us that you were not clear about how well you were learning. So, we have asked your teachers to involve you more in assessing your own work so that you have a much clearer idea of what needs improving.

Your parents or carers wanted more information about how the school was doing. We have asked the teachers and governors to find new ways of keeping them fully informed.

Each of you can play your part in making this school even better by listening to your teachers and continuing to work hard to meet the targets they set you.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Taylor

Lead Inspector

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